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HIGH EFFICIENCY LIGHTING SYSTEM

This application is a continuation-in-part of application Serial No. 08/606,219 filed March 7, 1996, which is a continuation-in-part of application Serial No. 08/328,574, filed October 24, 1994, now U.S. Patent no. 5,500,561 dated March 19, 1996, which was a continuation of application Serial No. 08/129,⁵⁷⁵~~375~~, filed September 29, 1993, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 07/944,796, filed September 14, 1992, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 07/638,637, filed January 18, 1991.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 The field of the invention is high efficiency uninterruptable lighting systems.

Uninterruptable power supplies are well known accessories especially when applied to computer equipment to "ride out" brief power outages so that no data is lost or compromised. Some have more battery storage capability so that operation may be maintained for an extended outage. Some special lighting systems are also protected in a similar fashion by an uninterruptable power source for critical applications such as operating rooms in hospitals. In lieu of such systems, reduced amounts of auxiliary emergency lighting is provided for special areas by modular systems which are only engaged during power outages; these modules are often used in stairwells and consist of a housing enclosing a battery, charger, power sensor and one or two flood lamps.

These prior art systems do nothing to enhance lighting efficiency, and would not be considered as substitutes for conventional lighting.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of this invention to provide an uninterruptable lighting system that can be routinely substituted for conventional building or office lighting.

It is another object of this invention to provide high efficiency operation with lower operating cost than conventional incandescent and fluorescent lighting systems.

It is yet another object of this invention to provide long term uninterruptability (3 hours +) with small storage volumes.

It is an object of this invention to provide optimum battery management for long storage life, ultra low maintenance, and economical operation.

It is a further object of this invention to provide for economical connection to an alternate energy source such as a solar photovoltaic (PV) panel.

It is another object of this invention to provide a system with enhanced safety through low voltage operation between the power control unit and the lighting fixtures.

It is yet another object to achieve high power quality with low interference through very high power factor and low total harmonic distortion.

It is an object of this invention to provide for expansion of the lighting system through a modular approach to increase subsystem and component standardization to reduce cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In keeping with these objects and others which may become apparent, the present invention includes a high efficiency lighting system for maintaining normal lighting conditions by lighting fixtures requiring DC electrical power.

The system includes a power control means for receiving AC electrical power from a grid source and delivering required low voltage DC electrical power to the lighting fixtures. The power control means
5 converts the AC electrical power to DC electrical power.

A battery provides, on a standby basis, the required DC low voltage electrical power to the power control means. The battery is connected to the power
10 control means so that the battery may be maintained in a fully charged condition by the power control means during normal supply of AC electrical power from the grid source.

The power control means delivers required DC
15 electrical power from the battery to the lighting fixtures during an AC electrical power outage to maintain the power without interruption.

The power control means can be a plurality of multiple power control means, each connected to its own
20 battery for maintaining the lighting in a building with multiple rooms.

An optional photovoltaic source of DC electrical power may be connected to the power control means for reducing the amount of electrical power taken from said
25 grid source.

The battery provides, on a standby basis, DC low voltage electrical power to the power control means, which power control means maintains the battery in a fully charged condition by electrical power from an AC
30 grid source.

In a version using AC power input only without an auxiliary battery or photovoltaic panel, the high efficiency lighting system for maintaining normal lighting conditions of lighting fixtures requiring DC
35 electrical power, includes the power control means for receiving AC electrical power from a grid source and

delivering required DC electrical power to the lighting fixtures, as well as a power control means converting AC electrical power to DC electrical power.

In a further embodiment for remote use, such as a remote campsite without access to conventional AC power, a high efficiency lighting system maintains normal lighting conditions of lighting fixtures requiring DC electrical power. The remote system includes a power control means for receiving DC electrical power from a photovoltaic panel and delivering required low voltage DC electrical power to the remote lighting fixtures, and the power control means controls charging of a battery.

The battery also provides, on a standby basis, the required DC low voltage electrical power to the power control means. It is connected to the power control means while being maintained in a charged condition by the power control means, during daylight hours of input of power from the photovoltaic panel.

Moreover, the power control means delivers required DC electrical power from the battery to the lighting fixtures during periods of time when power from the photovoltaic panel is not available, such as at night times.

25 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention can best be understood in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of basic uninterruptable lighting system;

Figure 2 is a physical block diagram of basic uninterruptable lighting system;

Figure 3 is a wiring layout of a single lighting module;

Figure 4 is a wiring layout of a four module system;

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Figure 5 is a block diagram of lighting system with a PV panel;

Figure 6 is a front view of power control unit;

Figure 7 is a wiring diagram and specs for two
5 lamp ballast;

Figure 8 is a wiring diagram and specs for single lamp ballast;

Figure 9 is a front view of battery enclosure; and

Figure 10 is a block diagram of power control
10 unit.

Figure 11 is a block diagram of an alternate lighting system using natural gas cogeneration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

15 Figure 1 shows a block diagram of the major components of an uninterruptable lighting system of this invention. It may be installed anywhere conventional building lighting is required. Unlike emergency lighting, this is a full service, high
20 quality lighting product. It functions with standard fixtures and lamps, without compromise in output quality and with no flicker in the event of a power failure. This permits normal building activities to continue for several hours using battery storage
25 without disruption of work activity due to loss of lighting. The key subsystem that ties the entire system together is the power control unit 1 which normally uses AC grid power to supply the lighting energy and keep the battery 2 charged. The lighting
30 fixtures 3 are fluorescent tubes using electronic ballasts which have a low voltage (nominal 26.6 volts) DC input supplied by line 5 from power control unit (PCU) 1. During a power outage, the DC line 5 is supplied by battery 2.

35 Figure 2 shows a physical block diagram showing the AC electric service panel 6 with a three wire cable

system supplying either 120 or 220 VAC to PCU 1.

Battery case 7 contains two group 24/27 deep discharge lead acid storage batteries wired in series and through a 30 amp fuse to the PCU 1. The wiring to all lighting fixtures 3 is at a nominal 26.6 volts DC. In the preferred embodiment, each PCU can power ten two tube 48 inch T8 fluorescent fixtures or 20 single tube fixtures.

Figure 3 shows a wiring layout for three offices as controlled by a single PCU 1. A closet area 17 is used to house battery 2. The AC line 4 leads to PCU I which is placed in the ceiling cavity. The DC wiring to the lighting fixtures is also in the ceiling cavity.

The 220 VAC input power to the PCU is 725 watts for an AC rms of approximately 3 amps. The equivalent 120 VAC unit will be about 6 amps. Because the PCU is power factor corrected to .99, a 20 amp circuit breaker and number 12 wire can support a maximum of 3 PCU's from a 120 volt line and 6 units from a 220 volt line for a total DC power output of about 2100 watts and 4200 watts respectively.

Figure 4 shows a wiring layout serving 8 small offices and four larger ones. This involves the use of four separate uninterruptable lighting systems using four PCU's 1 and four battery modules 2 located in four central closets 17. The four PCU's are supplied from a single 220 VAC circuit breaker in power panel 6 via AC cable 4 as distributed from distribution box 20. Each of the lighting systems supplies 10 two lamp fixtures 3.

Figure 5 shows an uninterruptable lighting system including a PV panel 25.

As shown in Figure 6, a front view of PCU 1, it is simply wired to two terminals. This simple system configuration permits high security lighting using an AC line, battery back-up, and PV shared contribution.

A system with the PCU alone attached to the AC line is a viable lighting system that can pay for itself by providing high efficiency DC lighting. By adding the battery subsystem, the user achieves uninterruptable lighting. By using a system without a battery but with AC input and a PV panel, the power savings of the PV contribution is achieved with the balance supplied by the AC input. In an area remote from the AC grid, a system using a PCU attached to a large PV panel and a larger battery can supply totally solar lighting. The PCU is sufficiently flexible to support all of these configurations of lighting systems. It can also supply other DC loads besides lighting, such as for example, household appliances, microwave ovens, heaters and the like. Furthermore, it can also alternately accept external DC power from many varied sources such as wind generators or engine powered generators.

Figure 6 shows a front view of PCU 1 with finned heat sink 28 and terminal strip 29.

Figure 9 shows a front view of the battery case
25 with hinged lid 36 and latches 37. It is a
thermoplastic case rated only for sealed type lead acid
batteries.

the power junction means. Other voltages are also possible, such as 13.3, 26.6, 39.9 etc.

The Battery Undervoltage Cut-Off disconnects the battery in situations of depletion to prevent "over sulfation" or chemical and physical damage to the storage battery. The PV Voltage Regulator and Suppressor is a power conditioner block to suppress voltage transients (such as from lightning strikes in the vicinity) and also to prevent over charging of the storage battery from the PV panel.

Figure 11 is an alternate embodiment for a loadside powered lighting system including natural gas in a cogeneration component. AC power 50 is normally converted to DC power by DC power converter 51 and control means 52. However, a cogenerator in the form of a DC gas generator 53 receives natural gas from a natural gas source 54, and sends DC power to building lighting system 55, such as electronic ballasted fluorescent lighting. This system provides a flatter and more predictable power demand for electric utility customers at building lighting system 55, since it supplants peak power from electric utility generating sources. This results in reduced demand charges, since gas offers a lower cost per unit of energy consumed, compared to conventional AC power from a public utility.

The cogeneration system can run continuously for lighting load 55, without having to be sent back to AC line power 50, which avoids the need for costly AC synchronization methods and sine wave purity, as is needed when sending excess electricity back to a public utility.

DC gas generator 53 directly couples to building lighting system 55 through a diode isolator that allows either AC or DC power to operate building lighting system 55.